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I'm a senior companion at Missoula Aging Serves and have been for about ten years. I want to tell you about one of my clients a man name Bill. His sole care giver was his wife. He had a therapist in to help with his mobility and work his joints. He had osteo arthritis and in a lot of pain. I came in to give his wife a break and a chance to do errands. When I first came Bill could transfer from his chair to bed ect.. Soon he couldn't leave his house without special help to go to doctors or anyplace. They put him in the hospital and put in a pain pump trying to limit the pain. His wife had a break down after 11 years from bi-polar disease; she ended up in the hospital and later ended their marriage.

Bill's parents were dead, his only brother had died, and his only child had died as a toddler. I kept seeing him once a week in the nursing home until he died unable to even feed himself or dress. Bill was a only in his early seventies. We form bonds with our clients care about them. Bill is only one example. We, senior companions, bring help as friends, help with errands, take them to doctors appointments, out to lunch, or do home bound visiting.

We perform a much needed service and we gain friendship and knowledge that only those who have lived longer can give. We also receive a small stipend that allows us not to have to make choices of heat, food, or medicine.